



T H E

PLAINTS of RUNNY MEAD:

A P O E M.



K. Runnymeade

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T H E
P L A I N T S
O F
R U N N Y - M E A D :
A P O E M.

In Honour of those gallant Spirits who opposed
the Tyranny of King J O H N.

This Royal Throne of Kings, this scepter'd Isle,
This other Eden, Seat of Paradise,
This precious Stone set in the silver Sea,
This Land of such dear Souls, this dear, dear Land,
Dear for its Reputation thro' the World,
Is now leas'd out like to a Tenement :
This England that was wont to conquer others,
Hath made a shameful Conquest of itself.

SHAKE SPEARE.

Y O R K :
Printed for the AUTHOR; by C. ETHERINGTON.
[Price ONE SHILLING.]

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T H E

PLAINTS of RUNNY-MEAD.

T WAS on old Thames's willow-fringed bank,
Where Royal Windfor's fun-gilt towers are seen
Inverted, 'neath the flowery meadows dank,
The blue wave dancing with the willows green.
There Boreas bad his roughest tempest blow,
The Zephyrs wept, and as they fled, bore by
Full many a moan the harbingers of woe,
And the clouds redden'd in the angry sky.

The

The nymph of Runny Mead in garments clad
 Of grief's dark hue, appear'd, with down-cast eye
 Fraught with the tear-drop, pensive, flow, and sad,
 While her swoln bosom heav'd the heart-felt sigh.

On her sad brow the wreathed primrose pale,
 The violet, and cowslip golden ey'd,
 Refus'd their odours to so rude a gale,
 Dropt their gay heads, and with the verdure dy'd.

Come, father Thames, she said, then smote her breast,
 Let floods arise, and covering sands befriend,
 Sink Runny Mead at once to peaceful rest,
 And recollection with her sorrows end.

These Northern blasts lay waste my fertile meads,
 While baleful groves of thriving thistles grow,
 Nor is ought found to flourish, save those weeds,
 The fragrant herbs and flowers imperfect blow.

For

And ah ! how chang'd these days from days of old,
 Then Freedom flourish'd—now she droops her head,
 Banish'd the isle by slavery and gold,
 And with her Fame, and white-rob'd Virtue's fled.

The painful retrospect awoke Despair,
 Extatic Fury seiz'd the woe-worn maid,
 Wild was her aspect, frantic was her air,
 And thus aloud the Visionary said.

Hark ! hark !—what harsh and warlike sounds are those ?
 Why beam yon burnish'd arms upon the fight ?
 Are they those slaves, tame Albion's courtly foes,
 Or are they Freedom's friends array'd for fight ?

'Tis they, those bold renowned Barons brave !
 On milk-white steeds steel-arm'd for England's good,
 Now, now they march, their dearest rights to save,
 Or dye the verdure with their crimson blood.

In

In vain the Tyrant John's detested bands,
 Their venal musters bring against a power
 That Virtue binds, and Liberty commands,
 Their injur'd fading honours to restore.

They come! they come! with terror o'er the field,
 Their flaming fwords like meteors flash around,
 While Freedom arms them with her ten-fold shield,
 And spreads the shout that makes the meads resound.

Resolv'd she leads the gallant phalanx on,
 (That band of brothers whom one heart unites,
 One mind controuls! by love of justice won,)
 To meet the Tyrant, and demand their rights.

Awe-struck! the Despot's slaves with fear crouch down,
 Nor dare view awful Freedom's radiant form,
 Vainly they claim protection from a Crown,
 That dreads itself the just tremendous storm.

Mark

Mark ye the haughty Monarch's furly brow,

Hear his stern voice, and see his lifted hand,

Hark! now he takes the great compulsive vow

That binds the Tyrant, and that faves the land.

Triumphant shout,—the noble deed is done!

The dreadful necessary conflict's o'er,

Their prowess hath the Magna Chârtâ won,

And bound in legal chains Tyrannic power.

So over Egypt flows the fruitful Nile,

The deluge rushes with impetuous force

To cool the heats, and fertilize the soil,

And then retires within its wonted course.

Ah! what avails the Patriot blood you lost?

Your filken sons have ended Freedom's reign,

Dead is that courage once Britannia's boast,

The slaves luxuriant court the abject chain

Britons, ye once were free, be free again,

Spurn the vile caitiffs and corrupting gold,

Delusive bait ; he but conceals the chain

Who buys you, and to him you're justly sold.

Strange ! round that Throne where Virtue beams divine.

Panders of hell shou'd intercept the ray,

While Vice, fell centinel, draws round the line

That guards each avenue of Freedom's way.

Thus do black glooms portending tempests foul,

Curtain from sight the glorious God of day,

And all his vivifying powers controul,

While drooping Earth laments his absent ray.

Strange ! round that throne which all the virtues fill,

A Briton born ! with native freedom bred !

With every tender sentiment, and will

To serve mankind, and strike the vices dead.

Strange !

Strange ! where the Monarch wishes ye were free,

Ye fervile fycophants to seek the chain,

To bind in abject bonds fair Liberty,

And to be tyrants, with a tyrant reign.

Ye've stript the rustic of his clay-built shed,

Ye parcel'd out his rights, ye bind his hands,

Nor leave a shelter for his hoary head,

And drive his orphans unto foreign lands.

Or give them up to Famine's meagre sway,

Hapless to roam in rags and wretchedness,

Where misery leads the drear, uncertain way,

To shun the proud of heart and pityless.

But whither fly to shun your iron hand ?

Not the Atlantic's farthest friendly shore,

But feels the scourgers of Britannia's land,

And trembles 'neath the rod of tyrant power.

How

How long ye fons of Britons, once so brave,

Must the chill'd spirits of your gallant race

Lie torpid in the bosom of the slave,

Ere rous'd to vengeance at your foul disgrace ?

Unnerv'd with dissipation's giddy round,

Beggar'd with gay Profusion's frequent call,

No more with mirth the villages resound,

Oppression's hand has desolated all.

Rouze Britons, rouze, remember ancient deeds,

Call up the virtues of your noble fires ;

Nor sleep in sloth, while wounded Freedom bleeds,

But bind her wounds up, or she soon expires.

Curs'd be such base, degenerate, fordid times,

Pride, Lust, and Avarice blacken Albion's fame ;

Posterity will shudder at their crimes,

When Time unfolds them with each traitor's name.

With

With grief oppress'd, the Patriot maid sunk low,
Thrice did she weep for Albion's lost estate,
Thrice did she heave the broken heart of woe,
And thrice her fault'ring words complain'd of fate.
The bleak winds blew the murmuring sounds along,
And the rain beat upon her flowery head,
The plaintive accents died upon her tongue,
And as a vapour of the morn she fled.

F I N I S.

With grief oppress, the Fanny maid sank low,

Thrice did she weep for Alston's lost estate,

Thrice did she heave the broken heart of woe,

And thrice her faulting words complain'd of fate.

The bleak winds blew the mourning tresses long,

And the rain beat upon her flowery hair,

The plaintive accents died upon her tongue,

And as a vapour of the night the fled.



